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THE ARABIC PORTION OF THE CAIRO GENIZAH AT CAMBRIDGE.

(*Fourth Article.*)

FURTHER SAADYĀH FRAGMENTS.

XI.

FOUR leaves, 14 × 9 cm., 2 cols.

This fragment contains the copy of a letter written on the instigation (or by dictation) of Saadyāh. It is addressed to three Rabbis, viz. Shelāmā, Ezra, and Ali, at Miṣr (probably Foṣṭāṭ). Several names which were written at the end are erased. As can be seen from the eulogistic formula in the superscription, the copy was made after Saadyāh's death.

The letter seems to be the answer to an inquiry sent by the above-named persons to Saadyāh and a certain Abul Fadhl. Now this name is only mentioned once, at the beginning, and is subsequently replaced by the title *Rās al-Gālūth*. It is therefore probable that Abul Fadhl was but the Arabic name of the Exilarch David b. Sakkai. The subject of the controversy is not stated in distinct terms. It must, however, have had reference to the quarrel with BEN MEIR¹. The name of the latter is, indeed, not expressly mentioned, but he is unmistakably alluded to in the uncomplimentary term *בן מושיך*². This shows that the letter belongs to the later stage of the quarrel, which received an acrimonious character through the abusive language

¹ See Poznański's article in *J.Q.R.*, IX, p. 152 sqq.

² See Schechter, "Geniza Specimens," *J. Q. R.*, XIV, p. 47.

employed in Ben Meir's reply¹ to Saadyāh's warnings against his calculations.

The difficulty created by the absence of any direct allusion to the question of dispute is enhanced by the rather mutilated condition of the text. There are various cases of vulgar and even faulty spelling, and general carelessness. Several passages are in Hebrew. The following is an attempt at

TRANSLATION.

From the writing of the Gāōn of Fayyūm. Peace abundant, (divine) mercy and grace, and the garment of peace², and understanding your kinswoman³, and a good name and . . . shall be unto you. My letter . . . on Friday. O thou whose welfare I desire, well-beloved, . . . I did not acknowledge a letter from you for some time (?), but I trust in God, and am firmly convinced, that you are well in every respect, especially since your letter reached the Head of the Academy (may God strengthen him), and Abul Fadhl (may God support him). You did not send the letter to me as a private communication (?), but because you are ashamed of what the people of the town did whilst you were with them. By the Almighty, it is my business that the matter takes its course, but I say again that it is *perhaps* (as you say). I hope, however, that it will be proved that you acted as you did in a moment of perplexity. Though the people were excited at the sight of the new moon, you did not find either . . . or . . ., except in what you did.

You mention in your letters, which I have read, that you imagine that everybody in Irāq has acted in a like manner. Perhaps so, as far as you are concerned, but I am certain about the matter. Had it been manifest in your eyes that the people of Irāq did *not* do so, you had not made that mistake in such an important matter, and in so great a . . . the like of which has never been heard. Every one who hears of it will wonder. I am ashamed to speak about it. Every one who comes to me to greet me asks my opinion of this affair in Miṣr. I cannot give any satisfactory answer, but I must write to you as soon as I have become aware of the matter, that it should be considered, that you take

¹ Published by Harkavy in *Studien und Mittheilungen*, V, pp. 213-20. See also p. 220, line 4 from the bottom, the words וּבְהַשֵּׁךְ בָּא וּבְהַשֵּׁךְ יֵךְ, which confirm Harkavy's suggestion that the fragment in question belongs to Saadyāh's ס' הַמְעִידִים.

² Isa. lxi. 3.

³ Prov. vii. 4.

counsel and make good what you have mismanaged. I wait, however, until the Head of the Academy (may God strengthen him) has written a reproof and warning in this letter to the community, and dispatched it in two copies. You find in it something to stand by. I can therefore be brief in mentioning its long explanation. [I also wait] till the Exilarch (may God strengthen him) sends a memorandum and a scroll for future generations with regard to what *Ben Mahshikh*¹ did, when he contrived four chapters² over and above . . . measure. I have sent these four copies of the two letters of the President of the Academy and the two copies of the letter of the Exilarch again to you, and I hope that you will receive them and make proper use of them, so God will it. O my brethren, act in this matter on my behalf and on behalf of all the Sages who are in the two Academies. If a person leads away a community to the town to join it [its reprehensible conduct], we want your solicitude [for our cause]. For I know that God has endowed you with intelligence, insight, sagacity, and shrewdness. I do not say this in order to praise you, but in order to awaken and admonish you. Fear the God of Israel, guard your souls, be pure, and assist others to be so. Be not, contrary to this, objects of our sorrow, but of pleasure. You should relieve us from this grief and give up that practice. It is known to us that there are people of good sense left in the town, who fear the Merciful and endeavour to be righteous. Be energetic in this matter day and night, morning and evening, because it is more important than trade and daily bread and every urgent business.

A copy of the letter of the President of the Academy shall always be with you and before your eyes; you shall read it continually. Every word of it is of fundamental importance. Learn it by heart; let one teach it the other and copy it for him, so that each of you shall read. . . . I have written in it, to the other, until you are all of one mind. May your efforts be fortified and your words united.

Know that we did not lose sight of what is incumbent on us, but everything depends on you, like a chain, as it were, hung round your necks. God expects this of you, and will call you to account for it. Be therefore no longer wayward as you have been—enough of disgrace³. I hope that you will but seek for a cause, till you are able to speak (?). Of causes there are many. Show zeal for heaven, since this is the time for zeal. Stand in the breach, because it is a time of dissoluteness. Trust in God, and he will help you. Let me

¹ Stands for מאיר בן (and in connexion with Job xxxviii. 2).

² See *J. Q. R.*, XIV, pp. 52 and 453.

³ Ps. cxliii. 3.

know in your letter what you intend to do in this affair, both in your welfare and in your needs, so God will it. Peace upon you for ever.

To the Rabbi Shelāmā, the great Rabbi Ezrā, and the Rabbi Ali, may our Rock support and uphold them.

XII.

Vellum, 15 × 15 cm.

The following fragment gives the beginning of a treatise on Exod. ch. xii. The writing is unfortunately so faded that the text looks very mutilated, much of it being quite illegible. From what remains we can, however, gather that the object of discussion was the festive calendar.

As regards the authorship of the treatise, the front page not only ascribes it to Saadyāh, but the translation of verse 1, as far as it is preserved, tallies with the words of his translation of the Pentateuch. There cannot therefore be any doubt that we have here the remnant of a genuine work by Saadyāh. Material and appearance of the fragment justify us in giving it a very remote date. From the formula, "May his soul rest in Paradise," attached to the author's name in the superscription, we may infer that the copy was made not long after the author's death, and hardly later than the eleventh century.

Now although we lament the loss of nearly the whole treatise itself, the fragment has a short notice in Hebrew and Aramaic on the front page, which is a precious little document. Its interest is even augmented by the circumstance that two words bear superlinear vocalization of real Babylonian origin. The notice is also of some historical value, as it mentions two places, east of the Tigris, which harboured Jewish communities. With regard to one, Urmiah, we have only lately been informed that it is even now inhabited by Jews who speak an Aramaic dialect¹. The last-mentioned fact coincides with a remark

¹ See A. J. Maclean, *Grammar of the Dialects of Vernacular Syriac*, 1895; the same, *A Dictionary of the Dialects of Vernacular Syriac*, Oxford, 1901.

in the little document, and shows that they have preserved their dialect for many centuries. It runs thus in

TRANSLATION.

Treatise on "this month" [taken] from the treatise of Saadyāh b. Josef of Fayyūm, may his soul rest in Paradise.

Holy unto the Lord . . . Community of Urmiah. This book is holy unto the Lord. It was given to me as a present by R. Baruch Israel, who lives in Merāgha. He took it from the district of Urmiah, for there remained in this place no people who could read it, not even one word in the Arabic language. The person who bequeathed it did so with the condition that people should peruse it and learn from it the arrangement of the holy days and new moons according to the regulations laid down by the Sages, &c. Since¹, however, no one remained who could read it, this condition fell into abeyance. Its holy character did not, however, cease, because it is holy unto the Lord, be his remembrance extolled and praised. Selāh, for ever, Amen, Amen.

And I wrote it, Efraim b. Azaryāhu, the mean disciple. Peace.

XIII.

One leaf, 17 × 13 cm., 16 lines.

The *verso* of this small fragment contains the introductory lines of a treatise by Saadyāh on "Testimonies and Agreements." As appears from the opening words, it formed the first in a series of his writings on civil law. The work has hitherto been regarded as completely lost, and has only been known under its title אלוהאיק (Hebrew השטרות)².

This small remnant can, of course, only give a very inadequate idea of the work in question. Yet they are not without an interesting feature. This is the definition of "Truth" given in them, a definition which invites comparison with that laid down by Saadyāh's contemporary, the Philosopher Isaac al-Isrāli³ as follows: Truth is that [conception]

¹ The next eight words are in Aramaic.

² See Steinschneider, *Cat. Bodl.*, col. 2161, and *Arab. Literatur der Juden*, p. 49.

³ See *J. Q. R.*, XV, p. 691, and Steinschneider, *Jubelschrift*, Hebrew section, p. 139, l. 15 sqq.

which is identical with the thing [conceived]. Those who dispute this [definition] say: Truth is a statement which is confirmed by proof either in an abstract or a concrete manner. Says Isaac: This definition only explains the qualitative side of truth, but not its nature. If one asks: "What is truth?" the answer would be: "It is identical with the thing itself." If, however, the question is: "*How* is this?" the answer would be: "Because it is a statement which proof confirms either in an abstract or a concrete manner."

I now affix the TRANSLATION of our fragment:—

Treatise on Testimony and Agreements as composed by R. Saadyāh Gāōn (blessed be his memory).

He says: The whole of this is one of the chapters on jurisprudence which I am prepared¹ to discuss on. I have, however, decided to take this chapter first, because I realized the urgent want of it on the part of the people, as well as its great usefulness. In the beginning I say: Praised be God, the God of Israel, who is Truth manifest, who makes Truth the noblest object of knowledge.

Now Truth is that which finds its place in intellects which are immune of all damage, and clear in the souls which think by their means. This definition and its application are rife among scholars [in accordance to what] the Holy Writ says: They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.

XI.

T-S. 6 Ja. I.

Fol. 1 verso

אלבלד ואנתם מעהם ובאלעזין
עליי אן יגרי דאך עלי מא
גרי ולכני ארגע פי הדא
אלי אן אקול לעלה בל
ארגו אן יכון. אנכם אנמא
פעלתם דלך חין תחירתם

Fol. 1 recto

מן כט גאון פיומי זכ לב
שלום רב וחמלה וחנינה
ומעטה תהלה ומורע לבינה
ושם טוב ועוז ותעצומות
תהין לכם כתאבי יום אלגמעה
יא מן. .בת² ען סלאמה וברוך הטוב

¹ perhaps in the sense of partic. viii.

² Prob. גרנה

וּאֵן הָאֵת אֶלְעָמָה עֵנְד לֹם אַקֵּר לָכֶם כְּתָאבָא מִד(?)
רִוּיָא אֶלְהִלָּל פִּלֵּם תִּנְדְּרוּ	זִמָּאן וְאֵנָא וְאִתְק בַּאֲלֵלָה מֵע
מַחִיצָא וְלֹא מַסָּאנָא אֶלָּא	עֵלֵם וּוּקוֹף עָלֵי אַנְכֶם פִּי
מָא פִּעֲלַתְמוּה וּיְקוּי מָא	עֵאפִיָּה וְסִלְאמָה וְסִימָא
אַקִּרְבָּה פִּיָּה אִיצָא מִד דְּכִרְתֵּם	אִדְ וְצֵל כְּתָאבְכֶם אֵלֵי רֵאס
פִּי כְתִבְכֶם אֶלְתִּי קִרְאֲתָהָא	אֶלְמַתִּיבָה אַעְזָה אֶלְלָה וְאֵלֵי
אַנְכֶם תּוּהַמְתֵּם אֵן גְּמִיע מֵן	אֲבִי אֶלְפִּצֵּל אִידָה אֶלְלָה
בַּאֲלַעֲרָאק כְּדִי עֵמְלוּ	אַנְכֶם לֹם תִּדְעוּ אֶלְכְּתָאב
וְלַעֲלֶכֶם בֹּל הוּ עֵנְדִי יִקִּין	אֵלֵי כְּאַצָּה אֶלָּא חִיָּאָא
לֹו צַח עֵנְדְכֶם אֵן אַהֵל	מִנְכֶם מִמָּא פִּעֲלָה אַהֵל

Fol. 2 verso

נִסְכְּתִין וּפִיָּה מָא תִּקְפוּ עָלֵיה
אֶכְתַּצֵּר דִּוֵּן דְּכִרָּה וְטוֹל (שֵׁר)
שִׁרְחָה וְחֲתִי כְתָב אִיצָא
רֵאס אֶלְגִּלוֹת אַעְזָה אֶלְלָה סִפֵּר
זִכְרוֹן וּמִגְלָה לְדוֹרוֹת פִּימָא
צִנַּע בֶּן מַחֲשִׁיךְ מֵן בִּדְעָה
ד' שְׁעָרִים בּוֹיָאדָה אִמְרַת?
עָלֵי כָל מִקְדָּאָר וְקִד אֲנַפְדָּת
הִדָּה אֶלְדִּי נִסְךְ כְּתָאבִי רֵאס
אֶלְמַתִּיבָה וְנִסְכְּתִי כְתָאב רֵאס
אֶלְגִּלוֹת אִיצָא אֵלִיכֶם וְאֶרְגֵּוּ אֵן
יֵצֵל אֶלְגְּמִיע אֵלִיכֶם וְתִנְתַּפְעוּ
בָּה אֵן שָׂא אֶלְלָה פִּאֲלֵלָה אֶלְלָה
יָא אֲכוֹתִי נּוּבּוּ עֵנִי וְעֵן גְּמִיע
אֶלְחַכְמִים אֶלְדִּין פִּי אֶלְמַתִּיבָתִין
פִּי הִדָּא אֶלְאִמֵּר פִּאֲנָה לֹו שְׁכִין

Fol. 3 verso

וְלִיל צִבְאָת וּמַסָּא וְהוּ אֶלְמִקְדָּם
עָלֵי אֶלְתִּנְאָרָה וְאֶלְמַעֲשָׂא וְכָל
מָהֶם, וְיִנְבְּגִי אֵן תְּכוֹן נִסְכָּה

Fol. 2 recto

אֶלְאִרָאק (sic) לִים כְּדָא עֵמְלוּ לֹם
תְּכוֹנוּ מִמֵּן אֲכַטָּא אֵלֵי הִדָּא
אֶלְאִמֵּר אֶלְעֲטִים וְאֶלְבִּלִיָּה אֶלְכְּבִירָה
אֶלְתִּי לֹם יִסְמַע מִתְּלָהָא וְכָל
מֵן יִסְמַעְהָא יִתְעַנֵּב וְקִד
(וְקִד) צִרְת אֶסְתַּחֲתִי אֵן אַחֲדָת
בְּחָא וְכָל מֵן יִדְכָּל אֵלֵי לִיִּסְלֵם
עָלֵי יִקוֹל אִי שִׁי עֵנְדִךְ עֵן כְּבִר
מִצֵּר פִּאֲנִיבָה בְּמָא לִים פִּיָּה
מִקְנַע וְקִד כָּאן יִנְבּ אֵן אֶכְתָּב
אֵלִיכֶם מֵן אוֹל מָא סִמַּעַת בְּהִדָּא
אֶלְכְּבִר אֵן תְּתִלָּא פִּיָּה וְתַחַכְמוּ
וְתַצְלַחוּ מָא אֶפְסַדְתֶּם לִכְנִי
צִבְרַת חֲתִי כְתָב רֵאס אֶלְמַתִּיבָה
אֶעֱדָה אֶלְלָה פִּי הִדָּא כְתָאב תּוֹכְחָה
וְאִזְהָרָה אֵלֵי אֶלְגְּמַאעָה וְאֲנַפְדָּה

Fol. 3 recto

מִכָּא גְּמַאעָה אֵלֵי אֶלְבִּלְד לִיצְלוֹנָה
לְכִנָּא מַחֲתִינִין אֵלֵי עֵנַאיתְכֶם
לֹאֲנִי אַעֲלֵם מָא קִד גִּרְסָה אֶלְלָה

פִּיכֶם מִן אֲלֶעקֶל וְאַלמֶעֱרַפָּה וְאַלפֶּטְנָה
 וְגוֹדָה אֲלֶחִילָה וְלִים אֶקוֹל הָרָא
 מִדְּחָה לָכֶם בֶּל אֶקוֹלָה תִּיקֵט
 וְתִנְבִּיָה כְּאִפּוֹ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 וְאַתְקוּהּ וְחוּסוּ עַל נַפְסֵכֶם
 וְכוּנוּ מִן הוּזְכִין וּמוֹזְכִין אֶת הָרַבִּים
 וְלֹא תִכּוּנוּ בְּכֻלָּאֵךְ דְּלֵךְ אֶלְרָח
 מֵא יִגְמִנִי בְכֶם בֶּל יִסְרֵנִי פִיגֵב
 אֵן תִּכְשָׁפוּ עֵנָא הָרָא אֲלִגְמֵאמָה
 וְתוּלִיו הָרָא אֲלֶעֱאֵר וְיִועֵלֶם אֵן
 קִד בְּקִי פִי אֲלֶבְלֵד אֲנִסֵּן לָהּ מַעֲנִי
 יִתְקוּ אֶלְרַחֲמֵן וְיַחֲסֵן כִּיף יַעֲלָה
 לֹא תִנְפְּלוּ עֵן הָרָא אֲלֵאמֵר נִהָאֵר
 כְּתָאב רָאס אֲלִמְתִּיבָה אַעוּה
 אֲלֵלָה בֵּין יְדִיכֶם חָדָא עֵיוֹנְכֶם
 תִּקְרוּנָהּ פִּי כֹל וְקַת פֶּאֶן כֹּל
 כְּלִמָּה מִן כְּלֵאמָה אֲצֵל מִן
 אֲלֵאצוּל תִּתְחַפְּטוּ בִּהָא וְיַעֲלֵמָהּ
 בַּעֲזָן לְבַעֲזָן וְיִנְסַכָּהּ בַּעֲזָן
 לְבַעֲזָן וְיִגֵּב אֵן יִקְרָא כֹל וְאַחַד
 מִנְכֶּם מִי (?) פִּי כְּתִבַּת בִּה אֲלִי
 אֲלֵאכֶר חֲתִי תִנְתַּמַּע אֲלִמְעֵאנִי
 כְּלֵהָא וְתוּתַלֵּף וְיִקוּי אֲלֵעוּם
 וְתִתְפַּק אֲלִכְלֵמָה וְאַעֲלֵם . . .
 נַחֵן קִד כְּרִנְגָא מִמָּא יִגֵּב עֲלִינָא
 וְאַלֵאמֵר מַעֲלֵק בְּכֶם

Fol. 4 recto

מִקְלֹדָה וְהוּ פִּי אַעֲנֵאֲכֶם
 וְאַלְרַחֲמֵן יִטְלֵבָה מִנְכֶּם וְיִטְאֲלֵבְכֶם
 בִּה אֲלֵלָה לֹא תִכְנִלֹנָא אֲכַתֵּר
 מִמָּא קִד פַּעֲלַתֶּם רַב שְׁבַעֲנוּ בּוּז
 וְאַנָּא אֲרִנּוּ אֵן תִּכּוּנוּ אֲנִמָּא תִטְלָבוּ
 סַבֵּב חֲתִי יִמְכַנְכֶּם אֲלִכְלֵאֵם
 וְהוּדָא אֲסַבֵּאב כְּתִירָה הִתְקַנָּא
 לְשִׁמִּים פֶּאֶן הָרָא הוּ וְקַת אֲלִקְנָאָה
 וְעַמְדוּ בִּפְרִץ כִּי עַת פִּרְצָה הִיא
 וְתוּכְלוּ עֲלִי אֲלִרַחֲמֵן פֶּאֶנָּה יַעֲיִנְכֶם
 וְעַרְפוּנִי מֵא תַּפְעֵלָה פִּי דְלֵךְ
 פִּי כְּתָאבְכֶם בְּסִלְאִמְתְּכֶם
 וְחֻאִינְתְּכֶם אֵן שָׂא אֲלֵלָה וְשְׁלוּמְכֶם
 לְעַד
 לְכַבּוֹד רַבְנָא שְׁלֵמָא וְרַבְנָא
¹ . . . רַבְנָא עֲזָרָא יַעֲזֹרֵם יַצוּרֵנוּ
 . . . וְרַבְנָא עֲלִי וְיִתְמַכֶּם
 . . . זְכֹרוּ לְבִרְכָּה

¹ Other names scratched out.

XII.

T-S. 8. 237.

recto

אלבלאם פי החדש הזה מן קול סעדיה בן יוסף פיומי תנוח נפשו בן עדן
 קדש ליי [כנסת ארמיה זה הספר קֶדֶש ל... נתנו לי במתנה
 ר' ברוך ישראל החי במדינת מראנה, והוא לקח ממדינת אֶרְמִיָה כי לא
 נשאר שם קהל שיודעים לקרות בו ואפלו מלה אחת בלשון הגר[ית] ואשר
 הקדישו בזה התנאי הקדישו וכתב עליו להיות קוראים בו ולומדים ממנו
 דברי המועדים וראשי חדשים כתיקון חכמים וג' וכד לא אשתאר תמן
 אנש ידיע למקרי ביה בטל התנאי ה[זה] אבל לא בטלה קדושתו שהוא
 קדש ל... יתעלה זכרו ויתברך סלה לעד אמן ואמן
 וכתבתי אני אפרים בן עזריהו צעיר תלמיד.. שלום

verso

בסם אלהי ויאמר... וקאל אללה למוסי והרון פי בלד
 מצר [קאילא היא אלשהור הו] אול אלשהור יכון לכם אולא לשהור [אלסנה]
 בארך הדיא אכר וחי אליהמא פי מצר... כדי עי...
 קרב... אלשי ותניירה יעיד דכרה כמא קאל פי שאול... לו אך
 המלוכה וכמא... קאל ירמיהו ואל ירמיהו היה דבר... עצו... והו
 אכיר מא כאן... ר מא קאל פי דויד ואלה הבאים אל דויד לציקלג
 עוד עצור מפני שאול בן קיש ודאך כאן אכיר אלמדה... בעד
 קאל אללה החדש הזה לרז... גאז ללקדמא אן יקולון אן תשרי אול
 אלסנה... פנקול אן דלך... דלך... לא... יצאד אלכיתאב
 בל יואפיקה לאנה אנמא כאו יעירון... לו קאלו אן ניסאן לים הו
 ראס אלסנה עלי גהה מן אלנהאת ואמא קאלו אנה ראש השנה למלכים
 ולרגלים פקד חיו אלנץ ואלמנצון פיה... ש... בעינה וגאז אן תכון
 ההונא שהור כתירא יקאל לכל ואחד אנהא ראש השנה לשי פהדא...
 פקד אכתץ ניסן באנה ראס סנה... ותאריך למלוק ישראל כמא
 קאל ויהי בשמונים שנה וארבע [מאות] שנה ליציאת (sic) בני ישראל מארץ
 מצרים בשנה הרביעית בחדש... על... ואמא תשרי פהוא ראס
 אלסנה בתאריך אלעאלם ודלך יוכד כברא כמא קאלו אלרבונין כמא
 ... אלה תך אסמה געל שנת השמטה ביאנא עלי

XIII.

T-S. 8 Fa. 1.

verso

בשם רחמ

כתאב אלשהאדֶה ואלוהאיק טמא אלפה ר' סעדיה נאון זל
 קאל גֶאמעה הדיא גו מן אגזא אלפקה אלדי אנא עדיד לחאליפה לכני
 ראית אנ אסבק בהדיא אלגזו למא שאהרת מן שדֶה חאגֶה אלמֶה אליה
 ועלמת עטים מא (ינת) תנחפע בה ואקול פי פאתחתה תבארך אללה אלה
 אסראיל אלחק אלבין גֶאעל אלחק אשרף אלמעלומאת אמא בעד פאן
 אלחק הו מא קאם פי אלעקול אלסלימֶה מ[ן] אלפאת וצח ענד אלנפוס
 אלמדברֶה בהא והדיא אלהר מע אסתפאצתה פימא בין אלעלמא קאל
 אלכת' ענה כלם נכחים למבין וישרים למוצא . דעת

HARTWIG HIRSCHFELD.